Reassigning Meaning Quote Summaries

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“The degree and significance of an individual’s impairment is often less of an issue than the degree to which someone identifies as disabled.” (Linton, 225) A person who is disabled may hinder themselves more by over identifying with their disability. If a person views themselves as disabled, they may have some of the same “ableist” prejudices as able-bodied society.

“To say that I am physically challenged is to state that the obstacles to my participation are physical, not social, and that the barrier is my own disability.” (Linton, 226) The term ‘physically challenged’ implies that the person’s physical existence is a challenged one, while in reality, it is probable that the person has adapted and gets along very well physically. The true challenges that the person faces are social.

“One interpretation of the phrase [to overcome a disability] might be that the individual’s disability no longer limits her or him, that sheer strength or willpower has brought the person to the point where the disability is no longer a hindrance. Another implication of the phrase may be that the person has risen above society’s expectation” (Linton, 228) The phrase ‘overcoming a disability’ implies that the person’s hindrances are purely personal or physical. An underlying obstacle is the attitude of society toward those who are disabled.

“You are like everyone else, but only as long as you hide or minimize your disability” (Linton, 230) You are accepted in society as long as you try not to ‘deviate’ too much.

“Often, those who are not deemed normal are devalued and considered a burden or problem, or are highly valued and are regarded as a potential resource.” (Linton, 230) If you are a deviation from the ‘norm’, you might be a deficit, or you might be above average, in which case it is acceptable and commended.

“When disabled people are able to pass for nondisabled and do, the emotional toll it takes is enormous…These actions, though, may not result in a family’s anguish; they may, in fact, be behaviors that the family insists upon, reinforces, or otherwise shames the individual into.” (Linton, 229) Many times, a disabled individual does not feel the need to hide their disability but is pressured into it by family.

“Briefly, the medicalization of disability casts human variation as deviance from the norm, as pathological condition, as deficit, and, significantly, as an individual burden and personal tragedy.” (Linton 224) Those who require medical assistance to aid their disability are often viewed as miserable people who are a burden.

“Historically, disabled people have had few opportunities to be active in society, and various social and political forces often undermine the capacity for self-determination.” (Linton, 232) Disabled people have historically been discriminated against, generating low sense of self-efficacy.

“Much of the language used to depict disabled people relates the lack of control to the perceived incapacities, and implies that sadness and misery are the product of the disabling condition.” (Linton 232) The language that able-bodied people have generated to describe those who are disabled depicts them as miserable people who have lost control over life.

“A premise of most literature in disability studies is that disability is best understood as a marker of identity” (Linton, 225) On the surface, it seems that one of the biggest issues is that people identify disabled people with their disability.